

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application in light of the above amendments is courteously solicited.

Independent claim 1 has been amended so as to set forth with specificity the preferred surfactant in accordance with the present invention. In this regard the Examiner's attention is drawn to Page 5 of the instant specification in the Examples. Claims 1, 3, 10, 12, 15 and 21 have been amended so as to comply with 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph.

None of the prior art references cited by the Examiner teach the specific surfactant as now claimed in independent claim 1. In light of the foregoing, it is submitted that the instant application is now in condition for allowance and an early indication of same is respectfully requested.

An earnest and thorough attempt has been made by the undersigned to resolve the outstanding issues in this case and place same in condition for allowance. If the Examiner has any questions or feels that a telephone or personal interview would be helpful in resolving any outstanding issues which remain in this application after consideration of this amendment, the Examiner is courteously invited to telephone the undersigned and the same would be gratefully appreciated.

It is submitted that the claims as amended herein patentably define over the art relied on by the Examiner and early allowance of same is courteously solicited.

If any fees are required in connection with this case, it is respectfully requested that they be charged to Deposit Account No. 02-0184.

Respectfully submitted,

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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: "Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313" on June 3, 2003.


Rachel Piscitelli

Version with markings to show changes made to the specification

Page 6, delete the third paragraph and insert therefore the following:

The salt serves to stabilize the foam by means of repulsive forces due to the presence of polar groups at the interface, and may suitably be a monovalent salt such as potassium chloride, sodium chloride, potassium acetate, [acetate chloride] sodium acetate and mixtures thereof.

Version with markings to show changes made to the claims

1. (Amended) A foamable drilling fluid, comprising:
an aqueous solvent;
a surfactant comprising sodium lauryl sulfate; and
a polysaccharide.

3. (Amended) The fluid of claim 2, wherein said
galactomannan gum is selected from the group consisting of
hydroxypropyl guar, guar gum, hydroxypropyl [carboximethyl]
carboxymethyl guar and mixtures thereof.

10. (Amended) The fluid of claim 8, wherein said salt is
selected from the group consisting of potassium chloride, sodium
chloride, potassium acetate, sodium acetate [chloride] and
mixtures thereof.

12. (Amended) The fluid of claim [6] 8, wherein said fluid
contains said polymer in an amount between about 1.5 and about
3.0% w/v, said surfactant in an amount between about 0.3 and
about 1.0 % w/v, and said salt in an amount between about 0.1%
and about 0.5% w/v.

15. (Amended) The fluid of claim 13, wherein the foamed fluid has a [viscosity] density of between about 1.15 and about 5.0 ppg.

21. (Amended) A foam drilling fluid, comprising:
a liquid phase comprising an aqueous solvent, a polysaccharide and a surfactant comprising sodium lauryl sulfate; and

a gas phase selected from the group consisting of air, nitrogen, natural gas, CO₂ and combinations thereof.